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PEKING 030

August 16, 1973

TO: HENRY KISSINGER

FROM: David Bruce

Subject: Your Visit

1. My instinct would be to wait at least another week for possible Chinese response concerning date of your visit. If Chinese should suggest September time which proved mutually agreeable you might have substantive reasons to go ahead. Personally, I feel a visit there by you would be timely and valuable. On otherhand if not convenient for you--or even if it were--but there was insufficient substantive requirement, you could say that other matters had by then intervened to make it inconvenient. In any event, September 12-15 is doubtless out of the question because Pompidou will be there then.

2. I am inclined to think that it is Cambodia which gives the Chinese pause when they contemplate the possibility of an early meeting with you. They may be reluctant to talk until they can take a reading on the post-bombing situation as it develops. They probably dislike our decision to continue some forms of support after the bombing halt. Also, they may be having trouble with Sihanouk which might make an early meeting in the interest of neither of us.

3. Preparations for the supposedly impending Party Congress, of which there are many signs, may have the leadership pre-occupied to the exclusion of almost all other concerns. So far as we can ascertain, the date for the Congress is still uncertain, and they probably are having serious policy and personnel problems. In fact we have heard from Eastern European sources that such is the case.

4. Warm regards.

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